

## Situational Factors and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria

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Doi: 10.5901/jesr.2013.v3n1p211

### Abstract

The study investigated the situational factors and principal administrative effectiveness in Akure North/South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States respectively in Nigeria. The views of researchers and scholars on situational leadership were briefly discussed as it affects the leadership effectiveness in the school system. Based on this, four research questions were raised to direct the study and three hypotheses were formulated. The Descriptive Research design was used to carry out this study. The population for this study consisted of all the principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Akure North/South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States respectively. A total number of twenty five (25) principals and two hundred and fifty (250) teachers were selected for this study using proportionate random sampling technique. Data were collected with two sets of questionnaires designated Principals Demographic Inventory (PDI) for principals and Principals Effectiveness Inventory (PEI) for the teachers. The hypotheses generated for the study were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that no significant difference existed in the administrative effectiveness of principals based on school location and mode of communication. The paper recommends that principals in large schools should coordinate the activities of their vice- principals to ensure smooth and effective administration of secondary school system in Nigeria.

**Keywords :** Principal, Administrative, Effectiveness, Leadership, Situational Factors

### 1. Introduction

The administration of secondary school system in Nigeria has been bedeviled with many teething problems which consequently affect the effectiveness of some principals in the process of administering the school system. With large and ever increasing students' enrolment in our schools today, the principals have considerable responsibilities, catering for the different inadequacies that came with increased school size. Okeke (1985) noted that "the bigger the situation to be managed or administered, the more complex the leadership needed and the greater the task involved".

The principals of secondary schools in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria are faced with inadequacy and sometimes non-availability of infrastructure facilities that should help smoothen the teaching and learning process, thus, posing special administrative problems. The list does not include the variety of stresses and conflicts, accompanying social interaction in the schools, nor does it include the social and psychological conflicts resulting from ethnic and personality differences in the school setting. These limiting factors and constraints tend to make the administration of secondary schools less than favourable, because they place considerable limits on the degree of effectiveness of the school principals (Avery, 2004). Nwankwo (1979) opined that, in the process of managing these constraints, some school principals are more effective than others. Ibukun (1997) observed that leadership is affected by the organizational situation. The leader who adjusts his own individuality to fit the conditions of his organization is said to be of the situational or contingency school of leadership effectiveness (DuBrin & Dalglish, 2003).

During the 1960s, researchers recognized the limitations of the behavioural theories and began to refine and develop new approaches to the study of leadership. Ibukun (1997) observed that, this

approach could be sub-divided into two: the classical situational theory and the neo-classical situational approach. The classical situational theory believed that it is the situation which produces the leader. The neo-classical situational approach merely highlighted the importance of the situation in leadership with making each situation the controlling factor in leadership.

Blake and Mouton (1964) defined the relationship of three attributes of managers as concern for production, concern for people and hierarchy positional attributes. The variables, concern for production and concern for people bear similarity to the initiating structure and consideration aspects of the Ohio studies. The third variable, hierarchy, places the former notions in context the manner in which the concerns for production and people are linked together. They maintain that only the 9.9 style represents a successful integration of organizational and human values in all situations.

The contingency theory popularized by Fiedler (1967) posited that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the interaction of certain leader attributes with specific demands of the environment. The contribution of Fiedler's work to the contingency theory lies in his recognition that situations in which the leaders find themselves vary a great deal, and that different types of leaders would experience greater success in certain types of situations than others. Ibukun (1983) noted that contingency is one of the modern approaches to management since the situational theorists were criticized for failing to pinpoint the best management strategy for specific situations. This is the gap which contingency management attempts to fill (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 2002).

The contingency theory of leadership which Fiedler pioneered is particularly appealing because it has evolved from a variety of trait approaches which dominated earlier theories of leadership. While relatively few studies have been conducted across cultures, with Fiedler's model, there is a strong indication in its assumption that cultural differences will affect leadership situation. Hence, Fiedler's model can be used to explain leadership behaviour in Nigerian schools. On the basis of Fiedler's theory therefore, it can be said that those school principals who recognize the changing leadership situation in Nigerian secondary schools and adjust their leadership behaviour accordingly will tend to be more effective in their administrative roles.

In a study carried out by Omoregie (1995), It was discovered that leadership effectiveness of principals in urban schools was not significantly different from that of principals in rural schools. Another study by Boardman (1993) established that in schools enrolling approximately 500 pupils, the principal tend to spend the major part of his office in large schools, he rarely teaches, spending most of his time in administration. Another research carried out by Cohen (1976) revealed that larger schools were more bureaucratic and their incumbent heads were found to hold more bureaucratic role conceptions than their colleagues responsible for smaller schools.

This research paper attempts to find out the situational factors that could positively or negatively affect the administrative effectiveness of principals in Akure North, Akure South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States respectively. The research puts into focus the variables of school size, school location and mode of communication as they interact to bring about differences in the administrative effectiveness between school principals in the study areas.

Specifically, the following questions were raised to direct the study.

1. How administratively effective are the principals of schools in Akure North/South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States?
2. To what extent does school size affect principals' administrative effectiveness?
3. Does the location of a school affect principals' administrative effectiveness?
4. Is principal's mode of communication relates to his level of effectiveness?

## 2. Research Hypotheses

Based on the problem stated earlier and the research questions, the following hypotheses were generated.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in large and small schools.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in urban and rural schools.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals who use formal (written) and informal (verbal) communication patterns.

### 3. Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The present study is an investigation into the situational factors and administrative effectiveness of principals in Akure North/ South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States respectively. The study may be of importance in ascertaining some factors that could positively contribute to the administrative effectiveness of school principals in the study areas.

The population of the study consisted of all the principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Akure North, Akure South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. There were sixty eight public secondary schools in Akure North/South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria as at the time of this study. For accurate and effective sampling, the researcher obtained comprehensive data for all the public secondary schools in the study areas from the Teaching Service Commissions of Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. Twenty five secondary schools were selected through proportionate random sampling technique. This allowed for fair sample representation. The subjects of the study consisted of twenty five principals and two hundred and fifty teachers who were randomly selected on the basis of ten teachers per school.

The researcher utilized two sets of questionnaire designated Principals Demographic Inventory (PDI) for principals and Principals Effectiveness Inventory (PEI) for the teachers which were personally administered on the respondents.

The data obtained from the Principals Demographic Inventory and Principals Effectiveness Inventory were used for hypotheses testing. The data collected from the questionnaires were scored according to the selected variables of school size, school location and mode of communication. The statistical analysis employed were percentages, mean scores, and t-test for two independent means.

### 4. Results

The data used for the analysis were obtained from Principal Demographic Inventory (PDI) and Principals Effectiveness Inventory (PEI) and all hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level using SPSS. Before presenting the statistical testing and interpretation of the three formulated hypotheses, there is need to answer the central question "How administratively effective are the principals of schools in Akure North/South and Ikere Local Government Areas of Ondo and Ekiti States?"

In providing answer to this question, the total maximum score of principals in the Principals Effectiveness Inventory (PEI) was established to be 150 points i.e. 30 questions multiplied by 5 which was the highest score for all questions. The lowest score a principal could obtain was 30. The minimum point of effectiveness was theoretically set at 105 points. This was derived by multiplying 30 by 3.5 which is the upper limit of undecided on Likert- type scale. The result is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Administrative Effectiveness of Principals

<b>Score</b>	<b>No of Principals</b>	<b>Total Scores</b>	<b>x-Scores</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Level of Effectiveness</b>
30-90	1	87.6	87.6	4	Highly less effective
91- 104	2	206.7	103.35	8	Less effective
105- 130	21	2465.6	117.41	84	Effective
131- 150	1	132.3	132.3	4	Highly effective
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2892.2</b>	<b>115.69</b>	<b>100</b>	

The range of effectiveness of principals was 105- 150 and the range of less effectiveness was 30- 104. As shown in Table 1 above, 21 out of the principals sampled for the study scored within the range of 105- 130 points. This represented 84% of the total sample. On the average therefore, it can be concluded that Akure North/South and Ikere LGA's of Ondo and Ekiti States schools principals are perceived by their teachers to be effective in their administrative task function.

#### 4.1 Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in large and small schools.

In order to test this hypothesis, the principals selected for the study were categorized into two groups; namely principals in large schools and small schools. The t-test for two independent means was applied to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 :** t-test Summary of Difference in the Administrative Effectiveness of Principals in large and small schools

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Table t</b>
<b>Large</b>	15	117.27	121.06	0.31	2.0
<b>Small</b>	10	113.31	119.94		

$P > 0.05$

As presented in the table above, the mean scores of principals in large schools and small schools were 117.27 and 113.31 respectively, the standard deviations were 121.06 for large schools and 119.94 for small schools' principals. The calculated t was 0.31 tested at 0.05 level of significance, two- tailed test. Since the table value was higher than the calculated t, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that there was no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in large and small schools.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in urban and rural schools.

To test this hypothesis, the principals were categorized into two: principals in urban and principals in rural schools. The t- test for two independent means was then applied to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** t- test Summary of Difference in the Administrative Effectiveness of Principals in urban and rural schools

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Table t</b>
<b>Urban</b>	18	117.06	120.69	0.35	2.0
<b>Rural</b>	7	112.16	121.81		

$P > 0.05$

As presented in the table above, the mean scores for principals in urban and rural schools were 117.06 and 112.16 respectively. The standard deviations were 120.69 for urban principals and 121.81 for rural principals. The calculated t was 0.35 tested at 0.05 level of significance, two- tailed test. Since the table value was higher than the calculated t, the null hypothesis was retained. This

shows that, there was no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of urban and rural based principals.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals who use formal (written) and informal (verbal) communication patterns.

To test this hypothesis, the principals were categorized into two on the style of passing information: mainly written and mainly verbal. The t- test for significance between two independent means was applied to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** t-test Summary of Difference in the Administrative Effectiveness of Principals who communicate mainly in written and mainly in verbal

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t- value</b>	<b>Table t</b>
<b>Written</b>	11	117.1	123	0.25	2.0
<b>Verbal</b>	14	114.6	119.41		

$P > 0.05$

As presented in the table above, the mean scores for principals who communicate mainly in written and mainly in verbal were 117.1 and 114.6 respectively. The standard deviations were 123 for principals who communicate in written and 119.41 for principals who communicate in verbal. The calculated t was 0.25 while the table t was 2.0 tested at 0.05 level of significance, two- tailed test. Since the table value was higher than the calculated t, the null hypothesis was retained. Consequently, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals who communicate mainly in written and mainly in verbal.

## 5. Discussions

Results from the data collected showed that secondary school principals were perceived by their teachers to be effective in carrying out their administrative duties. It was also revealed that no significant difference existed in the administrative effectiveness of principals in large and small schools. This finding supports Omoregie's (1995) where he found that leadership effectiveness of principals in large schools were not significantly different from that of principals in small schools, From the calculated means however, it was discovered that principals in large schools had a mean of 117.27 and principals in small schools had 113.31. The implication of this finding was that, based on the mean scores, principals in large schools were perceived by teachers to be better in the administration of schools than principals in small schools. One would have expected that the principals in small schools would perform better, but reverse is the case. The finding may be due to the fact that principals in large schools are Grade One principals with more years of experience on the job, and also, they have two or three vice principals assisting the principals thereby making the administrative roles to be easier and more effective than their counterparts in small schools. This assertion buttresses the recommendation of Ibukun, Oyewole & Abe (2011) that there is need to place high emphasis and priority on years of experience in the appointment of principals.

The results of hypothesis two indicated no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals in urban and rural schools. This finding negates Omoregie (1995) study where he found that principals in rural schools were performing better than principals in urban schools. The reasons for the insignificant difference in this study may be due to the fact that the Teaching Service Commission based the posting of principals to both urban and rural secondary schools on the same criteria, especially in terms of qualifications. More also, with the attention of the two states government on improving the quality of education especially at the secondary school level, there is regular inspection and supervision of schools by the Ministry of Education in the respective states, thereby making all the school principals to be more alive to their responsibilities not minding their school location.

The result of hypothesis three revealed no significant difference in the administrative effectiveness of principals who communicate mainly in written and or mainly in verbal. The average score of principals who communicate mainly in written and mainly in verbal were 117.1 and 114.5 respectively. One should have expected principals who used verbal style to communicate to have the highest means, but the reverse is the case. This may be due to the fact that most large schools visited were more bureaucratic in structure than small schools. In such large schools, the principals would delegate authorities to administrative vice principal and academic vice principal with written documents. This enables them to have proper record and documentation of all the school activities. Teachers cannot be absent from school without writing letter to the principal through the vice principal before such request could be granted. Such letters are kept in file, hence, teachers must have genuine reason for not being in school as these letters are given to officials from the Ministry of Education anytime they likely visit school for supervision.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Arising from the finding of this study, one major conclusion that was drawn was that Akure North, Akure South and Ikere Local Government Areas school principals are effective in school administration. No significant difference existed in administrative effectiveness of school principals based on school size, school location and mode of communication.

Since more schools cannot be established to reduce the sizes of large schools due to the present economic stagnation, it is therefore recommended that a very large school should have at least three vice principals. Principals in large schools should also ensure effective coordination of the activities of the vice principals. This would make for effective smooth running and effective administration of schools. The government should provide enabling environment for school principals to improve on their performance through prompt release of running grants to school, ensuring quality assurance through regular supervision of school activities and refresher courses for school principals for optimum productivity in Nigerian secondary schools.

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